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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 003633

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NSC FOR DFISK
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DEPT PASS TO AID/OTI (RPORTER)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/14/2021
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [VE](#)
SUBJECT: OPPOSITION LEADER ROSALES PLANNING US VISIT

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT DOWNES,
REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) The Ambassador spoke by phone December 14 with Zulia Governor Manuel Rosales, their first conversation since before Rosales' four-month campaign for the presidency as the opposition's consensus candidate. The Ambassador congratulated Rosales on a hard fought and skillful campaign. He also noted that Rosales appeared well positioned to lead a responsible opposition in the years ahead. Rosales thanked the Ambassador and noted that, although he is tired post-election, he wants to launch some opposition projects now while the election results are still fresh in people's minds.

¶2. (C) The Ambassador said he may travel to Maracaibo around January 24-25 and would like to meet with Rosales at that time. Rosales said the sooner they could meet, the better, and added that he would be prepared to talk about specific cooperative projects and programs. Moreover, Rosales stands ready to identify Zulia State publicly with some of the USG's social and development programs. The Ambassador alerted Rosales to the likely postponement (subsequently confirmed) of the visit of House of Representatives Members Delahunt and Meeks. Rosales pledged to try to make himself available in Caracas for senior U.S. visitors.

¶3. (C) Rosales then said he would like to visit the United States soon, probably in the first three months of 2007. On the advice of his advisors, Rosales did not visit Washington during the campaign, but would now like to go to the U.S. capital, and possibly additional cities, before people forget about the December 3 presidential election. The Zulia Governor is amenable to waiting until after the Ambassador's late January travel to Maracaibo and open to recommendations for structuring the visit. Embassy strongly recommends that Rosales be received at a senior level in Washington and will work closely with Rosales' advisors to try to shape a productive agenda.

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